often an agent of the Aleppo merchant who furnishes the capital and has the necessary warehouses in Aleppo and the commercial knowledge and connections in the Syrian market and abroad to dispose of the crop at the best terms. 438 441

I. The Problem of Storage and Warehouses

The dependance of Jazirah on Aleppo merchants is such that until the present time there is not a single warehouse or silo to store wheat for a few months in all Jazirah belonging to an individual merchant or big farmer. During harvest season, the wheat is stacked in the open near the railway stations and left without cover until it is shipped to Aleppo. The hangers of the stations can only hold a small part of the crop. The Mira built a few depots but it is not known whether they will be put at the disposal of merchants. 438 241

The special conditions of cultivation in Jazirah connected with the problem of credit and land ownership make the transport of wheat from the farms to the stations during harvest season a hectic affair. This is caused by two reasons: in the first place, the farmer is always in need of money and has to ship his crop quickly to Aleppo to sell it, and, secondly, even if the big farmer is not in need of money, he does not feel it is safe to keep his crop in the villages. In most cases, he is only a tenant and it does not pay for him to construct a depot on land, he does not own. Even if he owned the land, he would hesitate to keep his crop away from the market until the winter months when he might need money but might find himself unable to transport his crop because of bad roads.

The logical solution would be to construct warehouses in the towns or near the stations, but, here again, the lack of capital prevents the accomplishment of this job.

The Kurd is the only farmer who keeps a part of his crop on the land. As a good and thrifty peasant, he stores his seeds, the provisions for his family and usually an amount of wheat equal to the seeds he planted. If anything remains, he sells to buy clothes and foodstuffs. The Kurd keeps the extra wheat he has in holes dug in the ground called "jifr". The hole is usually two meters in diameter and 2-3 meters deep. It is lined with "tibn" to keep the moisture away and the wheat remains in a good condition in it for several months. The peasant has a number of these jifrs depending on the 241 251

241 251 amount he has to store. The jifrs are usually dug around the village to guard them from theft. The condition of the future wheat crop in Jazirah becomes known by the end of March. At that time, if the forcast is favorable, the surplus wheat stored in the jifrs is brought to the market, but if the future crop is considered in a bad condition the wheat remains stored to be planted in the fall.

The second most important item of Jazirah commerce is the summer crops of rice, cotton, sorghum and sesame. They follow the same pattern of wheat and barley.

II. Cattle and Sheep

439 231 221 233 Jazirah has an active trade in transit shipment of cattle and sheep. Before the last few years, it was itself a provider of sheep. The Bedouin tilled a part of the land and grazed his sheep in summer and fall on the land around the village. In winter and spring he became a nomad again and migrated with his flocks to the south and east. It was customary to pass scores of villages in winter which were completely deserted and the mud houses sealed with one guarding left for the whole village. The expansion of mechanical agriculture reduced the grazing lands considerably and the number of sheep dwindled.

At present, sheep and cattle are imported from Turkey and Iraq. They cross the border on foot and are either smuggled in or pay customs duties. They rest in Jazirah and are fed, then transported to Aleppo by train, or, in springtime, on foot.

III. Imported Goods

438 The main imports of Jazirah are agricultural machinery and spare parts, textiles, fuel wood and building materials. Foodstuff which is not grown in Jazirah is also imported. Because no statistics are available, it is worthwhile to make a study of the volume and value of Jazirah commerce for the next few years as an indication of the development of the region.

IV. Commercial Future of Jazirah Towns

The commercial future of Jazirah towns and especially of Qamishli is assured. Jazirah already produced in 1946 17% of the